

Affairs at Pyeng Yang

Moffett +
Oct 1
E. G.

Seoul Korea

August 27 1894

Dear Dr. Ellinwood

It has not been from neglect on my part that you have heard nothing from me concerning the recent affairs at Pyeng Yang. The bundle of letters giving an account of the whole affair fell into the hands of robbers and the letters were reached Seoul.

I am glad to know that Mr. Gifford sent you an account of the main facts so that you can have a fairly accurate view of the situation. The Pyeng Yang affair has given place to one far more serious and much farther reaching in its probable consequences - The Japan-China War - so that our Pyeng Yang work depend almost entirely upon the outcome of the war.

With Mr. Gifford's letter before you there is no need for me to give you a detailed account of the troubles encountered by Dr. McHall, the persecution of the Christian helpers and the subsequent redress secured through the American Minister.

The American Minister deserves and has received the sincere thanks of us all for the prompt

vigorous and willing way in which he had looked after our interests and secured for us our rights. Certainly the Lord sent him here for just such times as we are now seeing.

Just after the settlement of the case with the Governor of P'yeng Yang the war came on.

I stayed in P'yeng Yang in order to strengthen our little flock and to protect them and had determined to stay with them unless the Lord showed me plainly that it was right for me to leave. I was there 10 days after the arrival of Chinese troops, tho' I did not then dare venture out for fear of being taken for a Japanese and shot on the spot. After repeated requests from Seoul to come up at once I still felt that my place was P. Y. and intended to stay on. But when the little band of Christians met & prayed over and talked over the question and then came to me advising me to leave them saying that I had done for them all I could and that they desired that I should leave in order to secure my own safety. I felt that the Lord had opened the way and I could leave without any neglect of duty. Had

quite an interesting experience making my way through the Camp of two hostile armies but the Lord opened the way and as an American I met with courteous treatment from both Chinese and Japanese. I reached Seoul a few days ago and while I am still full of malaria and feel run down after the trying summer in Peking Yang, I hope to be in good condition for a return there just as soon as the state of the County will permit. We do not know how long the war may continue but I fear that work in the interior will be cut off until some settlement is reached.

In case of a protracted struggle I am not quite clear as to what my duty may be. From one point of view it would seem rash and foolhardy to attempt to carry on work in P. Y. during the excited and disturbed state of the people. On the other hand Peking Yang is my place of work and the Lord is able to take care of His own even in the midst of a war. However that question is not before me for decision just now and when it comes I doubt not the Lord will make duty clear as He has heretofore.

The Peking Yang affair raised a number of questions

relating to the status of work, property, & in the interior. Mr. Gardner (British Consul General) denied our right to preach the gospel. [No subject should be given to this as we do not want that question raised] (and from your letter to Mr. Gifford I judge that he (Mr. Gardner) has found fault with Dr. Hill's property movements in P. Y.

While I wish to keep clear from any criticism upon the acts of others who like myself are seeking to push ahead in the Lord's work here I want my own acts to be free from any cause of complaint on the part of officials Korean or American. Especially I want the Board to put absolute confidence in me to the extent of believing that under no circumstances will I do that to which any moral exception can be taken.

At the risk of boring you with a long letter bearing upon the legal questions involved in the P. Y. affair I send herewith a copy of my letter to Mr. Hill the American Minister. From it you will be able to judge of the policy I have followed in seeking to gain an entrance to the interior. I am aware of the fact that it may not seem a very aggressive policy and that

Under it our final establishment in the interests
might have been postponed several years. For the
present all plans and policies are upset - but
as soon as war clouds clear away we shall be at it
again.

We all suppose that P. Y. is to become an
Open Port in case of Japanese victory but
this with all other ^{so called} probable results are mere
guess-work.

Hoping to be able to write you very soon
as to our prospect in Peking.

Very sincerely yours

Samuel A. Moffett

(Copy)

Pyeong Yang Korea May 20, 1894

Hon J. M. B. Sill

U. S. Minister - Seoul Korea

Dear Mr Sill

Dr. Stanton's verbal with Mr Gardner's message to Dr. Hall together with his explanations of the questions as they are coming before the Legation for adjudication show me the advisability of my laying before you an exact statement of the status of Pyeng Yang property in which my interests lie and in which I am now staying. In considering these questions please make a clear distinction between those relating to the property in which Dr. Hall has been and that with which I and my helper Han are connected. Dr. Stanton will lay before you all that relates to the so called "Hall Property" and I will confine myself to the "East Gate Property" which in its legal and financial aspects differs very materially from the "Hall Property" in connection with which all the troubles have arisen.

1st - I have not bought property - never said to anyone that I had bought it - had no intention of buying it. I furnished money to Koreans with

which to purchase knowing that when so purchased
the house would belong to them (not to me) and
would be subject to Korean law. Hence over a
year ago after the first purchase (an entirely
different piece of property outside the city) when in
connection with troubles over the Hall property,
the official ordered my man Han to reverse the
transaction and return the property, he did
so at once and received back the money. The
property which Han now occupies was purchased
several months afterwards and over it no trouble
ever arose.

2nd. I have never pretended to be residing
here - have always said that I was merely here
for a few months expecting to travel on to Euiju
or Seoul, and to return at another time.
Have always referred to Mr Han as the landlord
and owner of the house and Han occupied a
kitchen only of the house as a guest in an inn.
My man has always occupied the position of
an inn-keeper so far as my presence in the
house was concerned. Hence when before
the official he so represented the case to him.
The house is in the section where inns abound
and was heretofore so used. Of course my

See
incident

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intention has been to continue these visits until we had won our way to the goodwill of people and officials, so that eventually we should be accorded the privilege of residing here. In the meantime I have neither by act or pretension violated treaty or law, nor has my helper Han - unless it be in the matter of Christianity which is a question totally apart from that of property.

3rd. This property was purchased by Mr Han subject to the procuring of the old deeds which were in the hands of Mr Townsend*, whose claim on the property was recorded at the Foreign Office and the American Legation. From Mr Townsend I purchased for Mr Han the old deeds, knowledge of this transaction being fully known at the American Legation. Consequently when Mr Hong the former owner was questioned about selling property to a foreigner he denied having done so and referred to the fact that the property belonged to Mr Townsend who had sold it.

Knowledge of Mr Townsend's claim on the property was in possession of the official who said that Mr Hong's statement was true and all right. So he was released without further trouble.

* An American resident - Shanghai

And nothing further has been said about the property.

4th - Since the purchase by Mr Han, he has transferred the property to three Korean trustees in Seoul the deeds all being placed in the hands of Mr. Miller. The property is now therefore held by the three men in Seoul, I having ^{a statement} from them as to my claim upon the money invested - a claim secured by purchase from Mr Townsend.

5th. No order has ever come from the Korean Government or from any official either for the return of this property or for anything else in connection with it since its purchase by Mr Han. Until such an order is given I hope no mention of this property will be made to the Korean authorities. When such an order comes (which however I do ^{not} look for) if on the ground of its purchase by a foreigner it should come according to the treaty in a lawful way through the Legation. In case it comes unlawfully by the arrest of my employee, without previous complaint to the Legation, I hope the Legation will take the ^{same} stand as in the present trouble and insist upon the

immediate release of my man. When such an order comes in the lawful way through the Legation it will be time enough to explain to the Government that the foreigner has not bought the property and to let them know that it is held by three Koreans in Seoul. Then if they insist upon these men returning the property I hope the Legation will present my claim, secured from Mr Townsend and heretofore allowed by the Foreign Office. Certainly I should not (as I did not before) object to those Koreans obeying a Korean law or order of Government, tho I should counsel them in returning the property to first secure all the money invested in it and to this end I should ask at least the friendly intercession of the Legation to prevent them from being cheated out of the money because of their connection with foreigners. I think from the above that it will be clear that as yet the Government has raised no question as to this property and I think the first mention of it may be left to come from the Korean authorities.

Bearing upon the rights and Privileges of foreigners as to property in P'yeng Yang may I offer the following -

I think investigation will bear out the statement that the present Governor allowed the Japanese to purchase property here, which property is now owned by a Japanese & occupied by Japanese (including a Japanese woman) who are living here and are engaged in the manufacture & sale of candy. It seems that a year or so ago some Japanese who came here in connection with the much purchased property - a large house & several small ones. The Governor hearing of it orders the transaction reversed, but when they come to return the large house and receive back the money, it transpires that the Korean who had sold it, had with the proceeds paid a large debt he owed the Governor. Rather than return this money, the Governor allowed the Japanese to retain their house which they still hold. In addition to this the Japanese have been allowed to rent property and in one case one lived for four months in a house for which he paid 2000 cash rent per month. Since then this man has moved into the house owned by a Japanese (referred to above).

A Japanese physician has been here for a year (making one visit to Seoul) renting a house on the main street where he lives and is engaged in the sale

of drugs. If the Japanese have been allowed these privileges - cannot our Legation ask the same privilege for us? This is all on the Liberty Question.

* Mr. Seward as Clerk -
Clerk to S. Hall

On the subject of Christianity it is evident from the position of the Legation as to our having no treaty right to preach the Gospel that we can look for no protection for the native Christians. Leaving them to the care of Him who cares for us all we will confine ourselves just now to seeking protection for our employees and the preservation of our right to employ them. My letter to Dr. Underwood I think stated quite clearly the facts which show that our employees were unlawfully arrested and beaten and that money was extorted and all this too after the order for their release had been received. In fact in obeying the order to release them they had them unlawfully beaten and demanded that they should have nothing further to do with foreigners. For this direct violation of our treaty rights I most earnestly make request for the punishment of the two men the Boukran and the James runner. This with the return

of the money extorted, either by the Government or by the Portuguese will I feel sure prevent similar troubles in the future and will secure but what justice demand for their unlawful deeds. May I suggest too that unless some movement is to be made looking towards the toleration of Christianity; that the Legations refrain from notifying the Government of their position that the treaty does not give the right to preach the Gospel, or provide protection for native Christians. Punishment upon the officials for violation of the rights of employees will have a deterrent effect upon the persecution of Christians until religion toleration can be secured, while the admission on the part of the Legations that they will do nothing to protect Christians will simply let loose a horde of Jansen runners upon all those who have professed Christianity. You will find us ready to obey all laws and treaty provisions in every respect and ready to make reparation wherever and whenever we may contravene them but at the same time we ask that all our rights be carefully guarded and that so far as possible all privileges granted to other nations be secured for us. Believing that these officials

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have violated the treaty we especially seek
their punishment as otherwise in the mere
exercise of our right to travel we shall be
constantly left without protection and subject
to the insults from the Jansen-receivers who
will feel that they have nominal permission from
officials to interfere with us and cause us
trouble. Unless this case is used in order to
emphasize the fact that officials who violate
treaty rights will be held to a strict account
we shall see a repetition of troubles whenever
a foreign hated official obtains a little power.
Believing that you are ready to do for us all
that you possibly can I beg leave to lay
before you the above facts & suggestions.

Should the Korean Government raise any questions
as to this property may I ask for an opportunity
to meet & talk with you about it before the
Legation gives to the Government the facts as I
have presented them to you. I should not wish
to give to the Government the facts with reference
to the three trustees in Seoul - unless there was
need to do so - for fear that they would be
needlessly exposed to mistreatment or injustice because of
their connection with us.

With kindest regards very sincerely

Samuel A. Moffett